

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House is supreme. The will of the hon'ble member is supreme. I cannot object to it. Hon'ble Member and other representatives who belong to the foodgrains' Association are in correspondence with the Government but all of them are convinced about the propriety of the provision and are not ready to take the responsibility to the effect that artificial scarcity will not be created anywhere, there will not be hoarding, profiteering and black-marketing. Is there someone who can take responsibility about it. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHYAM BEHARI MISHRA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble Minister is wrong if he says so. I have taken the responsibility. By making such a statement, the hon'ble Minister is misleading the House. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your point is heard.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : But the Government is always ready to check misuse of this Act. Thus, the bill is pending before the House for making it judicious so that innocent people are not insulted or harmed. The consensus that emerges after the debate will be implemented. But the common consumer is greatly affected by it. All the concerned traders are the members of the Foodgrains Association. They are also a part of the society engaged in an important work. We too realise it. But some of them do commit such offences unless a punitive provision is made, it is difficult to exercise control over it. Thus jurisprudence is the eye of law. If a guilty person goes unpunished it is not good, but if an innocent is punished it is very bad. Therefore to make the Act judicious, we are open for suggestions which we shall consider.

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the States which are yet to give their concurrence include Bihar also. I would like to know from the Government whether the Hon'ble Minister will impress upon the Government of Bihar to give their concurrence at the earliest? So that their image in the country is not sullied.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a reminder has been given three-four times, but on the question of impressing upon they say that we and the hon'ble members will hold a joint meeting. Alternatively, we shall approach them to know their opinion. We shall try in that direction.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Question Hour is over.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please wait for a minute.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I am going to raise your point.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question is listed at Sl. No. 285. One minute is still left. Let me ask my question.

12.00 hrs.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Harin Pathakji, only one minute is left.

...*(Interruptions)*

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question can be accommodated. There is still one minute left for Zero Hour to start. ...*(Interruptions)* My question number is 285. ...*(Interruptions)* I should be allowed to ask the question.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : I have official data with me. The traders, who were arrested under the Essential Commodities Act. ...*(Interruptions)*

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : It is not proper. Why are you not allowing me to ask the question. ...*(Interruptions)* I shall walk out of the House if I am not allowed to put my question. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All right. You can speak. Question Hour will be over by the time you ask the question. Only half a minute is left.

[English]

Action Plan for Horticultural Projects

*285. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to formulate any action plan to develop the infrastructure for giving a boost to the horticultural sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of achievement made in terms of area under horticultural crops and production?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Development of horticulture sector was one of the thrust areas during the VIII Plan Period. Considering perishable nature of the horticulture produce, development of infrastructure for post-harvest handling of the produce was, therefore, taken up as a major programme during the Plan Period. The National Horticulture Board (NHB), an organisation under the Ministry of Agriculture provided assistance during the period, for creation of post-harvest infrastructure facilities such as grading and packing centres, precooling units, specialised transport facilities, cold storages and for creation of marketing infrastructure for horticulture produce. These schemes are being continued during the current financial year. The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), another organisation under the Agriculture Ministry, has also been implementing a number of schemes for providing financial assistance for post-harvest operations to cooperatives of fruits and vegetable growers etc. through State Governments for creation of infrastructure facilities for storage, transportation, marketing, processing etc. The Ministry of Food Processing Industry is implementing a scheme for providing assistance for setting up of pre-cooling and post-harvest handling facilities during 8th Plan period from 1994-95 onwards.

(c) The estimated production of major horticulture crops in the country put together during the year 1994-95 was over 1175 lakh MTs from an area of about 131 lakh hectares in comparison to an estimated production of 958 lakh MTs from an area of 125 lakh hectares during 1991-92.

[Translation]

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to my question the hon. Minister has mentioned about the schemes launched and facilities provided, for marketing, processing and storage of potato and fruits. A record was set in the production of potato and fruits last year but the storage facility could not be provided therefor. Thousands of acres of unutilised barren land is there in the country. I would like to know whether the Government propose to utilise that land by starting horticulture on it.

[English]

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, the Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Forest Conservation Programme

*282. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :
SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that there has been continuous increase in pollution in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Government have formulated any scheme to speed up the forest conservation programme in view of increasing pollution;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the said scheme is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) Yes, Sir, Pollution has increased in the country, mainly due to growing industrial and transportation activities, generation of solid waste and sewage loads.

(b) to (d) There are a number of schemes augmenting afforestation and forest conservation which contribute to abatement of pollution. These schemes include afforestation measures mainly by State Governments under their programmes as well as schemes under various other development programmes including that of the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board. Also, while according environmental clearance to developmental projects, it is stipulated that a green belt be raised on the site. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 provides for compensatory afforestation in case of diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes.

[English]

Fish Diseases

*286. DR. ASIM BALA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) fish diseases prevalent in the country;

(b) the steps taken to prevent these diseases;

(c) whether the Government are planning to set up research centre for the fish diseases in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b) The diseases presently prevalent in fin and shell fish in the country largely relate to bacterial and fungal diseases, parasitic